Working with Distressed Students: A Decision-Making Tree for Faculty and Staff

STUDENTS OF CONCERN (SOC)
www.truman.edu/students-of-concern/

STUDENT AFFAIRS
www.truman.edu/student-affairs/

TRUMAN RESOURCES

STUDENTS OF CONCERN TEAM: The SOC Team assesses and coordinates responses to issues and concerns about students requiring intervention in order to help them achieve success at Truman, and help the campus community members feel safe and supported. Addressed concerns may include specific incidents or general concerns about behavior of a student or a group of students. When a referral is made (www.truman.edu/students-of-concern/), the team will attempt to determine what is happening and what type of assistance the student may need. Intervention will occur in the least intrusive manner appropriate in providing that assistance.

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Janna Stoskopf, Vice President for Student Affairs
660-785-4111

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Andrea Maag, Assistant Director
660-785-4409

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES
Dr. Brenda Higgins, Associate Vice President for Student Health and Wellness
660-785-4014

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER
Dr. Brenda Higgins, Associate Vice President for Student Health and Wellness
660-785-4182
After-hours non-emergency number
660-665-5621

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Melaniee Crat, Director
660-785-4215

CENTER FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
Brod Turnbull, Interim Director
660-785-4142

RESIDENCE LIFE
Dr. Jamie VanBoxel, Director
660-785-4227

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCESS & DISABILITY SERVICES
Julie Sneddon, Director
660-785-4478

PUBLIC SAFETY
Sara Seifert, Director
911 EMERGENCY
660-665-5621 Non-Emergency
As a Truman State University faculty or staff member, you sometimes encounter students in distress. This information will help you know what to look for, recognize the warning signs and take a course of action to get students the assistance they need.

STUDENT IS UNDER DISTRESS. SIGNS OF DOING (include, but are not limited to):
- Nervousness, agitation, or irritability
- Inconsistent school attendance
- Crying
- Changes in academic performance
- Changes in personal or classroom relationships
- Deterioration in hygiene
- Unusual aggressive or obtrusive behavior
- Decline in personal or academic performance
- Dependency (e.g., student is excessively clingy)
- Frequent alcohol and/or drug use

1. DIRECTLY ask student about your concerns and/or warning signs.
2. DIRECTLY ask student about suicide and/or homicide as it relates to the displayed warning sign(s).

INFORM YOUR SUPERVISOR OF THE SITUATION. WRITE DOWN
3. A number where you can be reached.
   Give a copy to University Police or to a staff member assigned to emergency intervention
   (include, but are not limited to):
   • Any background information you know about the student's difficulties
   • The name of the student
   • The student's address
   • See sample concerns and/or warning signs.

CALL UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES and ask to consult with a counselor.
660-785-4111. Do not email. This service is available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
You have the option to choose a counselor of your own choosing. If you need assistance in determining the appropriate resources, call Academic Excellence (785-4409) or consider contacting the Center for University Counseling Services.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE STUDENTS OF CONCERN TEAM

Some of these signs may present themselves due to academic skill deficits and test taking strategies. If you observe a student crying, you may question the student's mental health. When you contact a counselor about a student, the counselor will work with you to determine the proper course of action.

Discuss Counseling Services and/or other University Resources
If you're not sure of how to address any concerns the student might have about these resources, ask the student. If the student is unwilling to talk, call University Counseling Services (785-4409) and ask to speak with a counselor.

You will need to have the student sign a release before you can contact the Center for University Counseling Services.

Supervisor of the Situation.

You may be asked to complete the counseling form.

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REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE STUDENTS OF CONCERN TEAM By calling the Vice President for Student Affairs, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at 660-785-4112 or at stuart@truman.edu.

The University Counseling Services (660-785-4014) is available for ongoing consultations (as needed) to help address the impact of the situation.

There may be times when you and the student are comfortable with the decision to contact a counselor; at other times, the student's situation is pressing and you need assistance in determining the appropriate resources. If you need assistance in determining the appropriate resources, call Academic Excellence (785-4409) or consider contacting the Center for University Counseling Services.

Submit the incident to the students of concern team at truman.edu/students-of-concern/ or contact any team member.

EXPRESS YOUR CONCERNS TO THE STUDENT. POINTING OUT YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND ASKING ABOUT THE SITUATION.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER?

YES, IMMEDIATE DANGER IS CLEARLY PRESENT. EXAMPLES

• Frequent alcohol and/or drug use
• Undue aggressive or abrasive behavior
• Deterioration in hygiene
• Changes in personal or classroom relationships
• Changes in academic performance
• Crying
• Infrequent class attendance

SIGNS OF DISTRESS

Mood changes (e.g., becoming tense, anxious, agitated, irritable, tearful)
Inability to concentrate or with difficulty in expressing thoughts
Signs of anxiety (e.g., sweating, tremors, agitation, palpitations)
Lack of appropriate concern or self-care (e.g., neglect to personal hygiene
Changes in sleep patterns (e.g., excessive sleepiness or insomnia)
Decline in health (e.g., weight loss/gain, loss of energy)
Deterioration in academic performance

WORRYING ABOUT THE STUDENT'S SAFETY OR DO YOU SEE POSSIBLE SINGNING?

WARNING SIGNS (include, but are not limited to):
- Withdrawal from others (isolation)
- Talk about or threatens suicide
- Makes statements as if “I want this all to end” or “I can’t get on anymore”
- Significant confusion
- Behavior is bizarre, alarming and/or dangerous
- Makes statements about hurting or killing others
- Marked change in behavior, mood and/or hygiene
- Appears depressed (frequent crying,morning, overeating, weight loss/gain, loss of pleasure)
- Appears/report hopelessness or helplessness
- Engagement in self-harm (e.g., cutting)

UNCLEAR WHETHER IMMEDIATE DANGER IS PRESENT

EXAMPLE

• Student reports a history of self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or cutting); and now states desire to engage in this behavior

• Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicide/homicidal thinking that are not overly indicative of imminent danger

• Student’s behavior appears emotionally uncontrolled/uncontrollable

• Student’s response appears unexplainable (uncontrollable crying over a failed exam, no apparent response to the death of intimate family member)

• Student’s work, assignments and/or communications contain material that raises concerns about suicide, homicide and/or violence

IMMEDIATELY CALL POLICE AT 911.

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NO, IMMEDIATE DANGER IS CLEARLY NOT PRESENT

EXAMPLES

• Student describes feeling “upset” or “depressed”
• Student engages in self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or cutting)
• Student appears to be grieving (e.g., during a class break, she

DISCUSS COUNSELING SERVICES AND/OR OTHER UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

If you're not sure of how to address any concerns the student might have about these resources, ask the student. If the student is unwilling to talk, call University Counseling Services (785-4409) and ask to speak with a counselor.

You may be asked to complete the counseling form.

Supervisor of the Situation.

You may be asked to complete the counseling form.

NOTE: If you think the student is in an “Imminent Danger” state, you should contact University Counseling Services immediately after the decision making to reach a conclusion.

DO YOU SEE POSSIBLE SINGNING?

YES

YOU MIGHT BE CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT AS YOU SOMETIMES ENCOUNTER STUDENTS IN DISTRESS.